AN ANSWER To the Merchants LETTER, DIRECTED TO Ralph Mean-well, Now on Board the VAN-HERRING: With a Pursuit of the former Legorn Letter.

19 JANUARY 1679.

WORTHY SIR,

I RECEIVED yours, and in pursuance of your Directions, my self, with some others, have made it our Business to procure Subscriptions to a Petition (humbly desiring our Captain that his Council may sit on the day prefixed) in which undertaking we have not been a little discouraged for (which you'd hardly believe) not one in fifteen throughout the whole Ship would subscribe; nay, on the contrary, some there were on Board us, who instead of setting one hand to it, fail'd not to use both and tore it; but we have call'd them to accompt for it, though we fear to little purpose: but this usage has not wholly disheartned us, for by fair words to some, and threatning speeches to others, when we saw a Sailor in quandary whether he should set Pen to Paper or no, we told him there was no greater Test to prove him either an Algerine or a Christian; by which, and with other means, we have mustered a considerable number of hands: but because I will not flatter your expectation, with shadows instead of real substances; to deal truly with you, they are most of them but the Riff-raff of our Ship; but such as they were, some half a score of our principal Fore-mast-men humbly presented it to our Captain; but, Bless me! had you but seen how disdainfully

ſy he received both them and their Cables length of Scrawles; for indeed moſt of them were no other, for firſt you had a Name or two written in a tolerable hand, but then three or four Marks inſtead of Names, purſued them; which our Captain took for Hebrew Characters, ſtill inquiring into the Quality of the Mark-makers, he was informed they were formerly educated in the Art of Button-makers, Taggers of Points and Laces, and ſuch like Manufactures, whom the frowning World forc'd to Sea, and now are become Sailors: But in ſhort, the Captain no way allow'd of our proceedings, which we dare not own to our Ships Company: but on the contrary, have given out that he vouchſafed us a gracious Anſwer; which we ſuppoſe has wrought ſuch Effects, that within few days we doubt not but ſome others of our Company will appear in the like Caſe.

YOU may remember, I mentioned two pernicious Paſſengers lying on Board us in our great Cabbin. Alas Sir! We have nearer Two Score, and ſome of them of dangerous conſequence; in particular, one who has ſo often chang'd his Religion, when there has been alteration of Commanders, that he ſcarce knows what Government he would have aboard us; beſides many others, who are daily buzzing in our Captains Ears, that were we not aſſured of his great Conduct, ſome of them e're this time had betray'd us into our Enemies hands: As to the Sultaneſs, there is great hopes ſhe will (in a Pinnace of the Captains) leave our Ship and return to *Algiers*, the place of her Nativity; but for the Renegado we are like to be peſtered longer with him; for we have had Advice from aboard the Pinnace he ſtear'd, that he bred ſuch Diſſentions between the Sailors and their Captain, that 'tis thought, if ever they catch him aboard their Pinnace again, they'll Keelhale him.

I thought convenient to acquaint you, That our Council of War have Tried Five Muſſullmen, and have found them guilty of High Miſdemeanors, in that they have by Order of their Mufti read the *Alcoran* publickly, and have endeavoured to Algerize ſome Chriſtians; for which Facts according to Law they have received Sentence of being Tied up to the Yards Arm.

Further, I muſt acquaint you, That one of the Chief of our Council of War has been charg'd with a little under-hand Dealings, by brow-beating our Material Evidence, and privately ſetting on Shore ſome Mahometans charg'd as Actors or Abettors in the Conſpiracy; chiefly the diſcharging our Chirurgeons Mate, when ſo clear Evidence appear'd againſt him; how he will clear himſelf of theſe and other Crimes, he is charged with, my next ſhall inform you.

Thus have I given you an Impartial Account of our preſent unhappy Condition, which cannot but amaze you and the reſt of our Worthy Owners; to whom I deſire you would be pleaſed to impart this; and what other Tranſactions offers, you ſhall have by my next: Yet doubting not but our BRAVE CAPTAIN will by his Mature Courage and Conduct, uſe his utmoſt Endeavour for the due Proſecution of our Enemies; which will much exhilerate the hearts of our Ships Company, and eſpecially the Heart of

Your Faithful Servant,

RALPH MEAN-WELL.